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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 AID-20 UPW-01 RSR-01 /083 W

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O R 171040Z AUG 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8796
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USDEL FRANCE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A CDC, MR
REVIEWED BY Susan Szabury DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 13185

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: GENERAL MINH URGED TO WITHDRAW PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY

1. SUMMARY. GENERAL MINH NOW APPEARS TO BE UNDER MOUNTING PRESSURE FROM HIS STAFF AND BUDDHIST CONSTITUENCY TO WITHDRAW HIS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY IN THE FACE OF ALLEGED FRAUDULENT ELECTORAL PRACITICES BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

END SUMMARY.

2. [redacted] TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 16 THAT HE IS AWARE OF MINH'S SECRET DOCUMENT. (IT HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE PRESS HERE THAT AT A MEETING ON AUGUST 12 GENERAL MINH HANDED AMBASSADOR BERGER A DOCUMENT PURPORTING TO BE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PROVINCE CHIEFS ON HOW TO RIG THE ELECTION IN THIEU'S FAVOR.) [redacted] SAID HE IS CONVINCED THE ELECTIONS WILL BE FRAUDULENT AND THAT AS MATTERS NOW STAND GENERAL MINH HAS NO CHANCE TO DEFEAT PRESIDENT THIEU. [redacted] STATED THAT ACCORDING MOST BUDDHISTS HAVE DROPPED THEIR INITIAL POSITION IN SUPPORT OF MINH AND SENIOR MONKS ARE

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UNOFFICIALLY COUNSELING HIM TO WITHDRAW HIS CANDIDACY. [redacted] SAID THE AN QUANG LEADERSHIP COUNCIL HAS NOT FORMALLY ADOPTED THIS POSITION BUT EMPHASIZED THAT THE CHURCH DOES NOT WISH TO RISK OFFICIAL HARASSMENT AND A LOSS OF PRESTIGE IN A CAUSE ALREADY LOST. b-1 ed

3. [redacted] b-1 ed

4. BUDDHIST SENATOR [redacted] TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 16 HE THINKS MINH SHOULD DROP OUT OF THE ELECTION UNLESS "CONCRETE ACTION" IS TAKEN TO CURB ALLEGED UNFAIRNESS BY THE EXECUTIVE. [redacted] STATED MINH'S ADVISORS ARE NOW URGING HIM TO WITHDRAW AND NOTED THAT THE MOST POSITIVE MEMBERS OF MINH'S STAFF ARE MERELY SUGGESTING THAT HE DELAY HIS ANNOUNCEMENT UNTIL THE SECOND POSTING OF CANDIDATES AUGUST 24. b-1 ed

5. [redacted] HIMSELF FAVORS A DELAY TO MAKE POSSIBLE A LAST MINUTE U.S. INTERVENTION AND ALSO TO MAINTAIN THE FULL PRESSURE OF A THREATENED UNCONTESTED ELECTION WHICH [redacted] BELIEVES WOULD BE UNDERCUT BY A MINH WITHDRAWAL BEFORE AUGUST 24 WHICH WOULD ALLOW THIEU TO REINSTATE KY'S CANDIDACY BY A SUPREME COURT ACTION IN ADVANCE OF THE SECOND POSITING OF CANDIDATES. b-1 ed

6. [redacted] SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW MINH'S THOUGHTS ON WHAT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO KEEP MINH IN THE ELECTIONS BUT HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT THE REPLACEMENT OF 50 PERCENT OF THE PROVINCE CHIEFS BY THE START OF THE CAMPAIGN WOULD BE "THE MINIMUM." [redacted] b-1 ed

[redacted] STATED THAT IF ACTION WERE NOT TAKEN TO RESTRAIN THIEU'S "DISHONEST ELECTION PREPARATIONS", MINH WOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE ELECTIONS ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 24.

7. [redacted] b-1 ed

[redacted] SAID

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THERE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH EVIDENCE OF ELECTION RIGGING TO JUSTIFY MINH'S WITHDRAWAL.
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